Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

USDA Farm Service Agency

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE & CONSUMER PROTECTION • WISCONSIN •

USDA NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

WISCONSIN DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

What is CREP?

- Offers landowners an opportunity to receive financial incentive to voluntarily stop farming land abutting streams/wetlands & place it into conservation practices.
- Goal is to reduce ag. runoff along streams/wetlands by installing vegetative buffers & create wildlife habitat along waterways surrounded by agricultural uses.
- Return, land owners receive incentive, annual rental, and cost-share payments along with other assistance.

- CREP IS FSA - CRP
- Flexible design of practices.

- WI can enroll 100,000 acres
- $28 million in State Bond Funds

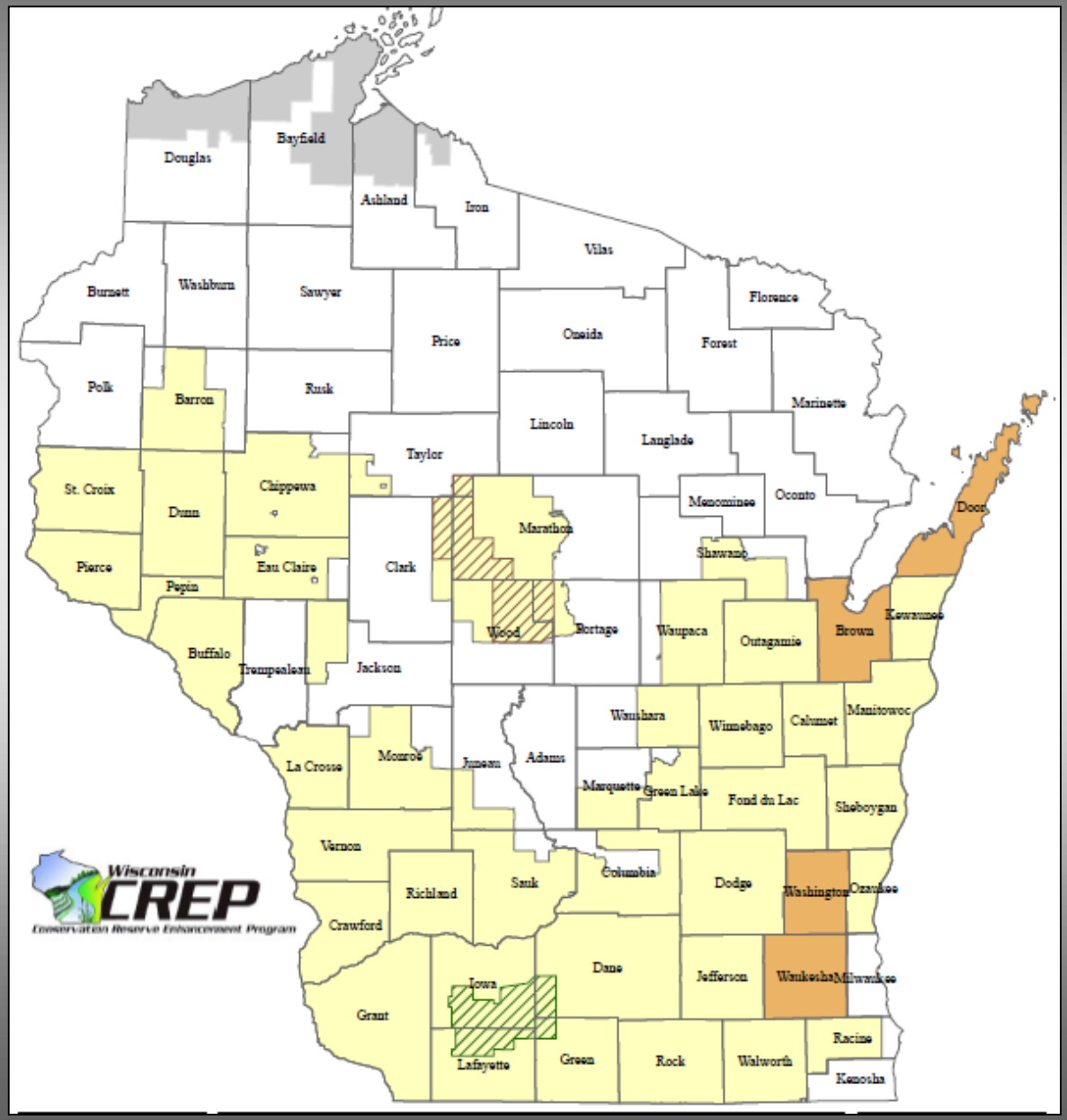
CREP – Contract Options

- 15 Year Agreement
  - 15 Years
  - 1.5 x/acre Annual Rental Rate State Incentive (2.5 – Lk Superior)
  - Option to be converted into an easement later
  - No legal review by DATCP, No title search required, Not recorded with ROD
  - Buyout an option

- Perpetual Easements
  - Perpetuity
  - 12 x/per acre Annual Rental Rate State Incentive (24 x – Lk Superior)
  - Requires DATCP legal review, title search, recording at ROD
  - No option of buyout

- State Payments through counties via 2 party check

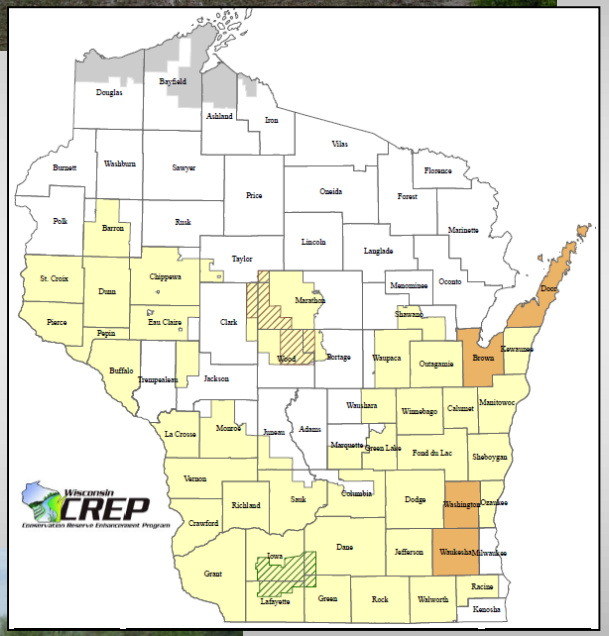
CREP Project Areas:



- Riparian
- Southern Grassland
- Northern Grassland
- Lake Superior

What Land is Eligible?

- Riparian
  - Cropland 4 out of 6 yrs (2008 – 2013), or meet rotation requirements, or marginal pastureland.
  - Within 150 ft of eligible stream or water body.
  - Min. 20 ft.



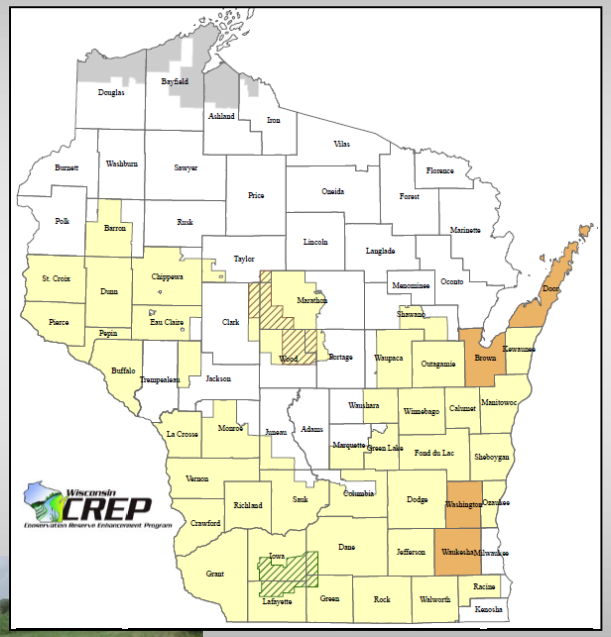
- Southern Grassland
  - Cropland 4 out of 6 yrs (2008 – 2013), or meet rotation requirements, or marginal pastureland.
  - Both:
    - Within 1000 ft of eligible stream or water body.
    - Highly erodible land (HEL)
  - Min. 20 ft

What Land is Eligible?

- Northern Grassland
  - Cropland 4 out of 6 yrs (2008 – 2013), or meet rotation requirements, or marginal pastureland.
  - Either:
    - Within 1000 ft of eligible stream or water body.
    - Highly erodible land (HEL)
  - Min. 20 ft

- Lake Superior
  - Cropland 4 out of 6 yrs (2008 – 2013), or meet rotation requirements, or marginal pastureland.
  - Within 200 min. to 300 max. of eligible stream of water body

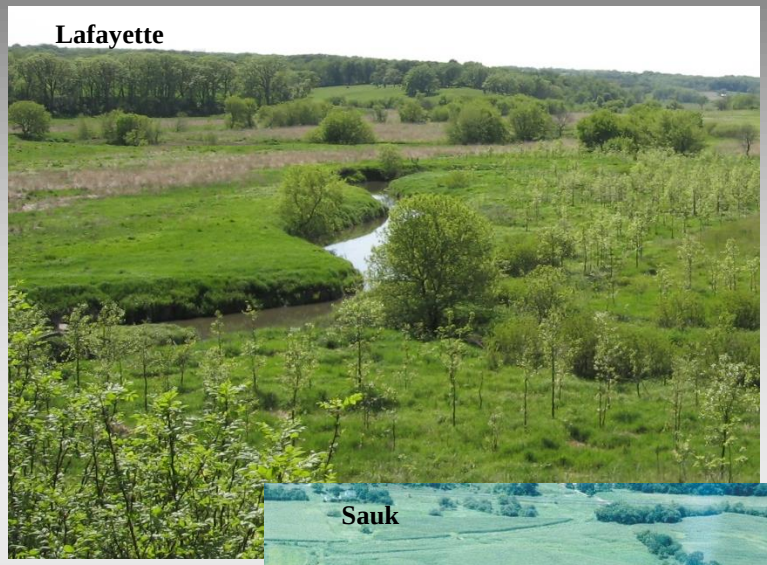
- 60% of field rule



Water Bodies

Include:

- Perennial & seasonal streams
- Lakes & ponds
- Sink holes
- More permanent wetlands



Seasonal Streams are:

- Usually have a bed and bank.
- Normally at the head of perennial streams.
- Will carry water seasonally.
- On USGS maps as dotted lines.

Seasonal Streams are not:

- Gullies
- Areas where water runs only after a rainfall or snowmelt.

Conservation Practices

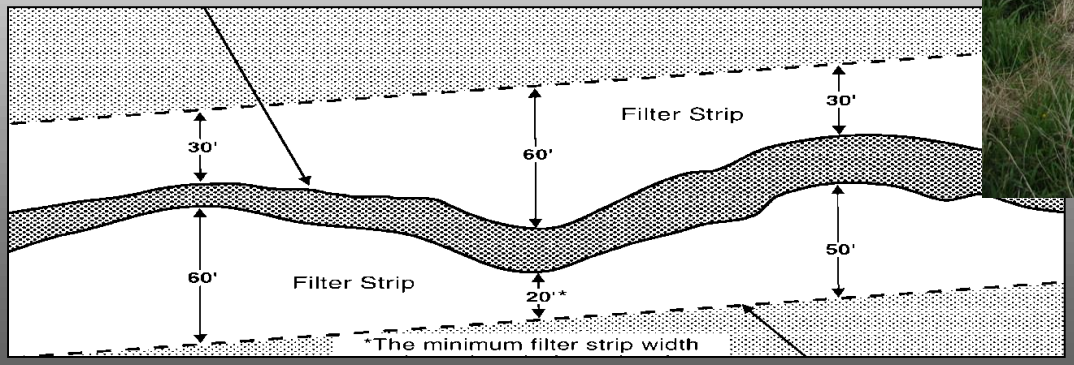
- CP1- Permanent Introduced Grasses & Legumes
- CP2 – Permanent Native Grasses
- CP8A - Grass Waterway
- CP21 - Filter Strip
- CP22 - Forest Riparian Buffer
- CP23 - Wetland Restoration
- CP25 – Tall Grass Prairie & Oak Savanna

CP21 - Filter Strip

- Purpose is to provide vegetation to remove nutrients, sediment, organic matter, pesticides, and other pollutants from surface runoff and subsurface flow. Enhancing the ecosystem of the water body.
- Located between cropland fields and water resources.
- Creates improved habitat for aquatic organisms and habitat for wildlife.

CP21 - Filter Strip

- Min. width 20 ft
- Maximum width 150 ft
- Stream bank width not included in area.
  - Included for distance calculation
- Land not meeting crop history not included
- Can average to make a straight line
- Plant species:
  - Typically cool season or warm season grasses and forbs.
- Often requires periodic spot mowing to
  - Control box elders, willow, etc

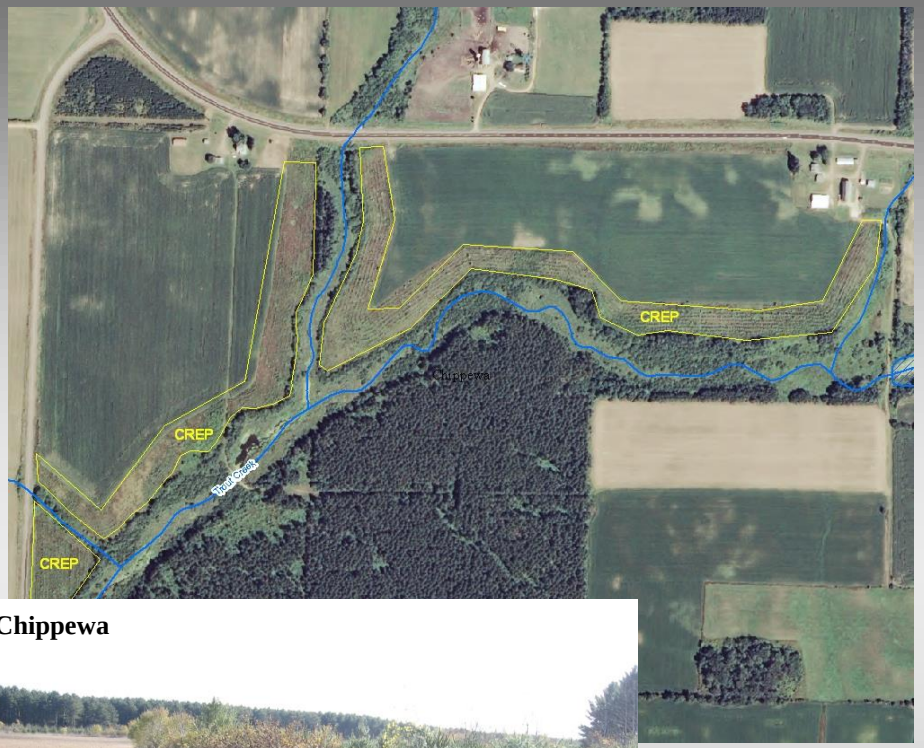


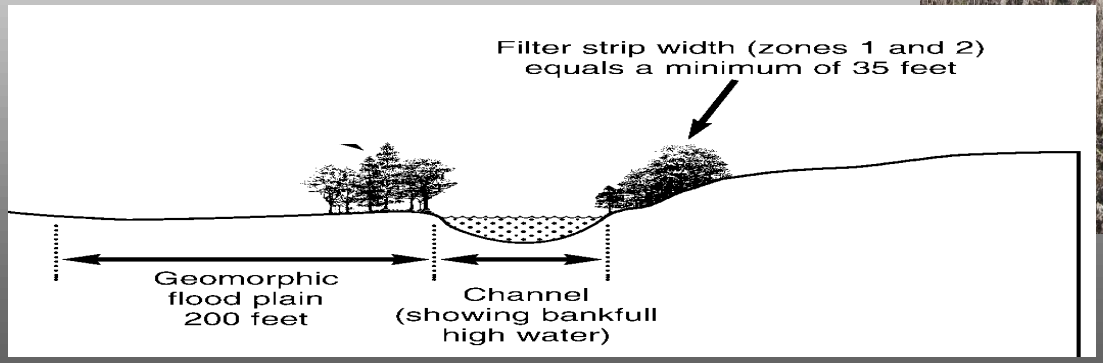
CP22 - Buffer Strip

- Purpose: reduce sediment, nitrogen and phosphorous runoff, and cut stream bank erosion.
- Consists of strips of trees & shrubs planted along streams or ponds.
- Buffers can be economic sites for growing various forest products, from seeds (nuts) to high quality fast growing timber.

CP22 - Buffer Strip

- Min. width 35 ft (200 ft Lk Superior)
- Max. width 150ft (300ft Lk Superior)
- Often planted on marginal pasturelands.
- Stream bank width
  - Not included with Cropland
  - Often included with Marginal Pasture
- Can average to make a straight line
- Plant species: Trees & Shrubs
- Stream Crossing/ Water access





CP23 – Wetland Restoration

- Purpose: rehabilitate the functions of wetland ecosystems that have been previously converted to agricultural use. Restored functions include increasing sediment trapping efficiencies, improving surface and ground water quality, preventing erosion, providing habitat for waterfowl and other wetland species, and reducing flood flows.
- Plant species are grasses, forbs and legumes tolerant to wet soils.
- Often requires maintenance to remove undesirable species such as willow and box elder.

CP23 – Wetland Restoration

- Max. 40 acres
- Cropland with FW or PC.
- Hydrologically connected to water body
- Conjunction with new Filter Strip (CP21) or Riparian Buffer (CP22).
- Up to 150 ft. filter or buffer
- Not to exceed 3:1 ratio Wetland/Buffer
- Wetland acreage 51% hydric soils
- Includes breaking drainage tiles & plugging drainage ditches.
- Plant species: grasses, forbs and legumes tolerant to wet soils

Financial Incentives of CREP?

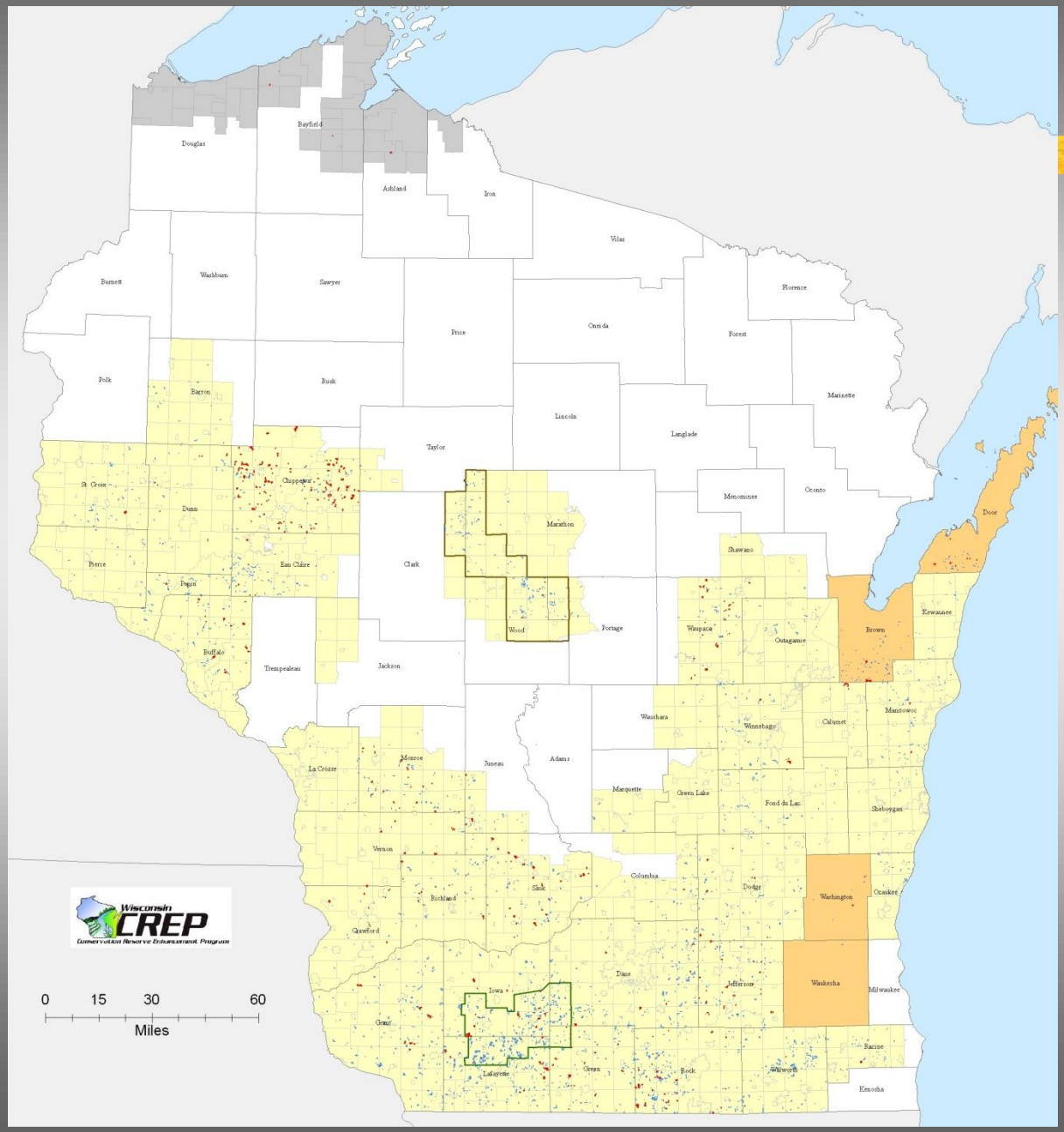
- Annual Payments
  - Rental payments annually for up to 15 years
  - Rates based on soil types, county land is in, and if cropland or marginal pasture land.
  - Annual rental rates for cropland typically range from $20-$180 per acre.
  - Plus added annual incentive payment of 35%-60% of the annual rental rate (based on CP)

- Up-front Payments (one-time)
  - FSA signing incentive payment (SIP) of $100 per acre for riparian buffer, filter strip or grassed waterway. (* not available for land expiring from an previous CRP contract)
  - DATCP incentive payment of 1.5 times or 12 times the annual rental rate based on whether a 15 year agreement or perpetual easement.
  - Both made soon after the contracts have been signed.

- Practice Payments
  - FSA provides 50% cost-share assistance for installing all eligible practices
  - FSA provides additional practice incentive payment (PIP) of 40% of installation costs
  - State funds cost share 20% of the practice installation costs.

- Ave. total federal payments over the agreement timeframe are $1,850 per acre and the ave. state incentive payment per acre is $150 for the 15-year contracts and $1000 for the perpetual conservation easements.

CREP Participation:



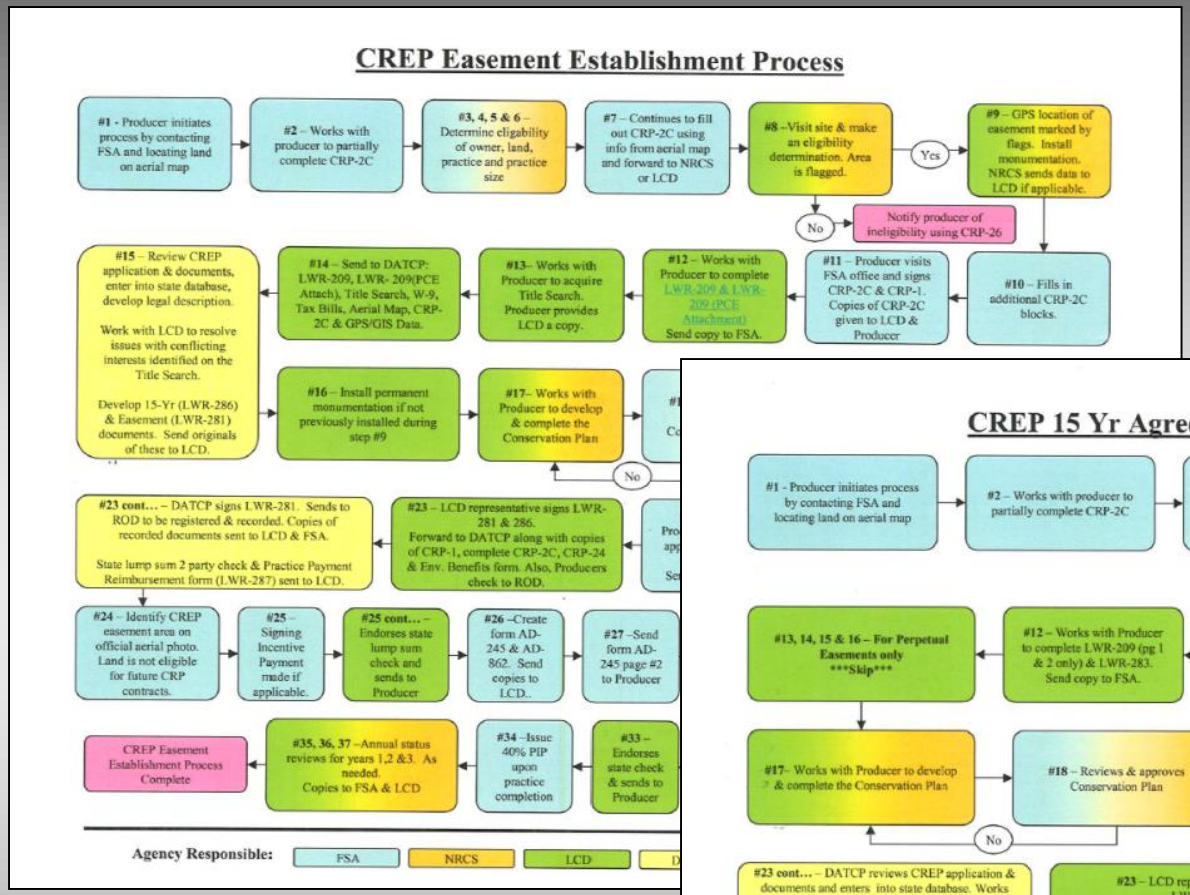
- Contracts
  - Agreements – 3500
  - Easements – 434
  - Landowners – 4000+
- 44,000 + acres
- 1,500 mi shoreline buffered
- 11,500 acres grassland
- Annual Env. Benefits
  - 140,000 lbs phosphorus
  - 75,000 lbs nitrogen
  - 69,000 tons sediment

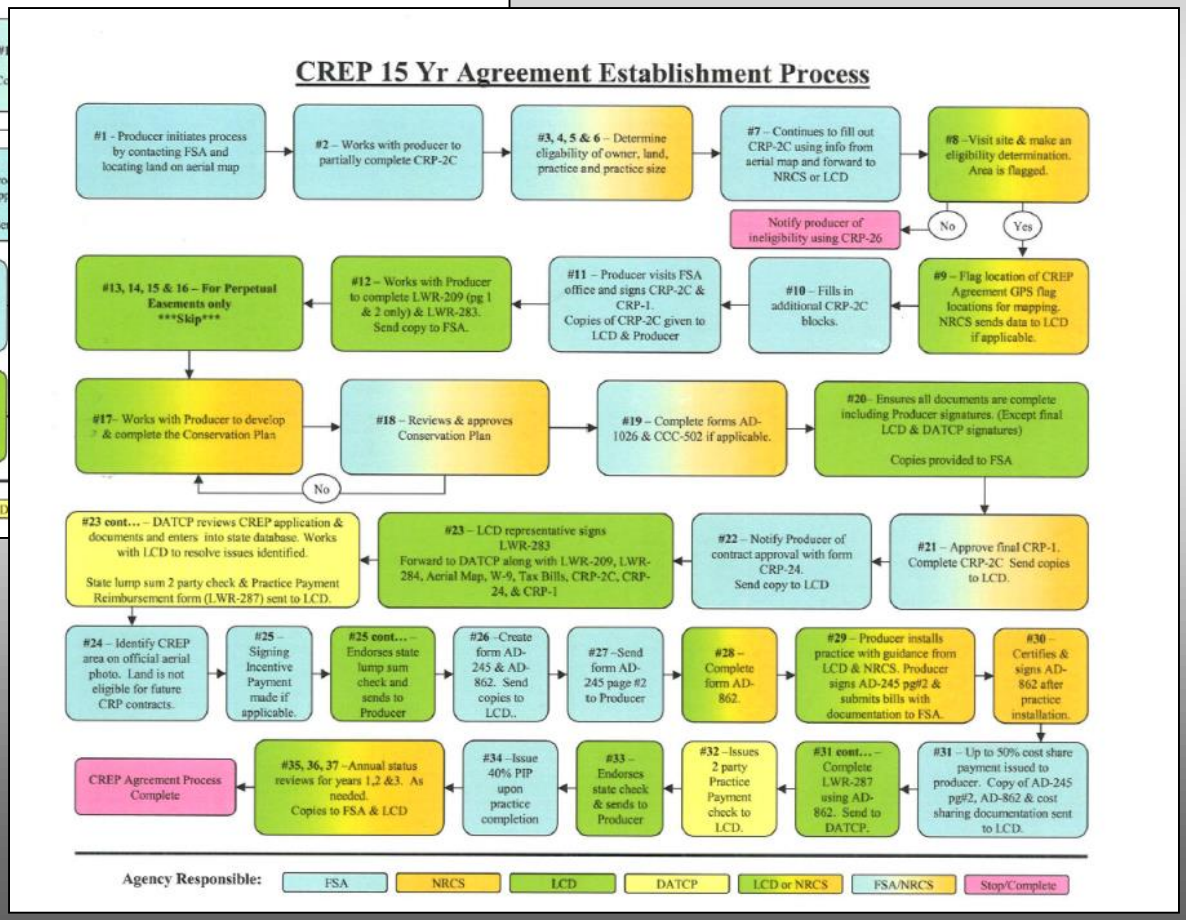
County CREP Role/Responsibilities

- Promotion!
  - General knowledge of eligibility requirements & practices
  - Identify landowners who may be eligible & to FSA/NRCS
  - Up to Counties
- Work with FSA/NRCS on site determination, location & conservation plan
- Assist landowner with State application, gathering FSA materials, & signatures
  - Agreement - 15 year agreement application
  - Easement – 15 year agreement + PCE attachment
- Develop 15 year agreement document & materials
- Distribute State incentive & cost share payment checks
- Help FSA/NRCS with implementation of conservation plan
- Monitor CREP site for compliance as needed
- Administer CREP agreement for contract duration
  - Transfers, Buyouts, Compliance Issues, Answer Questions, etc.

****County is landowners first point of contact for State side of CREP****

Application Process:





Tools Available to You:

http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Land_and_Water_Conservation/CREP/

- Main, Landowner & County Page
- Information & Materials
  - Process Flow Charts
  - Calculator
  - Easement Protocol
  - Forms
  - Updated Brochures
  - Project Area Maps
  - County Contact Lists